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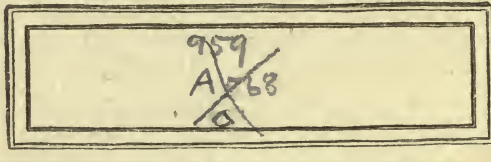
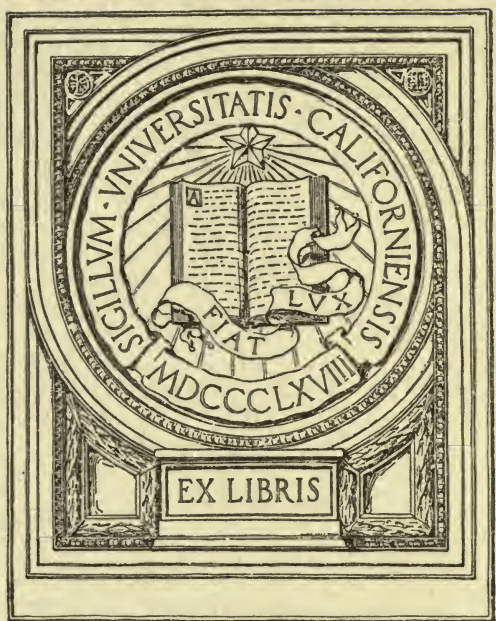
MARGARET LOVELL ANDREWS

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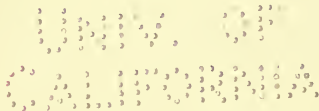
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ON PASSIVE SERVICE

By

MARGARET LOVELL ANDREWS

Author of "The Secret Things "



LONDON : MAX GOSCHEN LTD
20 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.

1913

I have to thank the Editor of the *Glasgow Herald* for hospitality and then for courtesy in allowing certain poems to become guests of another host in this book.

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TO VINDI
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TO
MY DEAR
AND
MY DEAREST

“ There was no one like 'em, 'Orse or Foot,
Nor any o' the Guns I knew.”

—*Kipling*



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CRUSADERS: A CHRONICLE

ON TRAFFIC

My London! I have loved her. How
Only a night ago I loved
The thought of all the men that moved
Through all the streets made empty now!

They move through Whitehall in a host,
They throng the Strand to Temple Bar,
And are to me as statues are—
A body empty of the ghost.

Fleet Street they throng to high St Paul's,
The parish church of half a globe,
But ghostly in his foggy robe.
(Ah! God! *his* are not empty walls!)

The seas of traffic toss and heave
Through day and night, through night and day
(Ah! God! St Paul's was built to say:
"They shall not hasten who believe.")

The seas of traffic heave and toss
Alongside London's throng of men.
It turned to ghostly traffic when
Your boat-train steamed from Charing Cross.

ON A VOICE

I might forget your face. But, though
We should not meet again, I know
Your voice for ever. In my ear
I have the ring of it, and hear
Its rumbling, like the far-off flow
Of water over pebbles. Slow
And full of notes it is, pitched low
For mem'ry; but I do not fear:
"I might forget!"

If rivers could forget to go
Seaward, perhaps my blood might glow
Less hotly at sound-mem'ry, clear
As any speaking voice. If, dear,
You could forget your Scotland, oh!
I *might* forget.

ON A HAND

I shut my eyes and see
Your hand, which breeding trains
To lie along the reins
Of what is and will be—
A man's hand, strong, but wrought
To fineness by fine thought.

I stop my ears and hear
The hurry of your pen,
The paper moving, when
A column's end is near,
As though the thin sheets moved
Were by your hand beloved.

I see you, hear you, still;
Shall always hear and see;
But what can drill through me
The sense of you? For will
Long memory do much,
If I must lack your touch?

ON A PHYLACTERY

If God bind: "Touch me not "

Hard on our foreheads after death, most dear,
Before we have forgot

There in His bliss the bliss of being here,
What must I do

To comfort modestly my hands when you
Come near?

When you come near? I must

Bind doubt on wrist and forehead: "*If you come.*"
No mansion's more august

Than mine within the house of Christendom;
And it is mine—

Dear, better be their own than be divine,
To some.

August to you's your north.

Would you sit down in mansion of the west?

I doubt you could go forth

To drop to my sea-coombe from your hill-crest;
And if betwixt

Our souls the gulf of race would still be fixed,
Doubt's best.

And yet I do not doubt

That, if God kept my feet upon the ridge,
I'd climb to you without

Fear, till at foot a gull was as a midge.

Soul's countryman,

The gulf feared now would be no greater than
Love's bridge.

ON A GRAMMAR

You'd smile at sight of the book I have,
Smile with your eyes, if your lips were grave,
At the road to you I lightly brave.

But, though the going is heavy, I
Go to the life of this people by
The path of a thorny grammar. Why,
The footprint this of an ancient Greek.
Strong as logician, as lawyer weak,
In the nouns he is not far to seek.

And here is a flint and there a flint
Of harder ring than the Greek's, to hint
That a Turk rode past and left this print.

Nor farther to seek in all the verbs
That scent the thorn-path like broken herbs
Bruised by the feet is this foot—the Serb's.

I never shall hear them marching? No.
But you, ah! you hear them, marching so.
It's into your life I mean to go.

I never shall see a swine-drove start
For Danube plains, or a bullock-cart.
You, ah! you see them. I'm at your heart.

ON A BOOK OF HOURS

Dear, I am England's heart and soul.
And now my heart is no more mine;
While in my soul I keep the hours
Kept not by canon of the whole
Of Christendom, and make a shrine
Within me for a use not ours.

One hour before the dawn I keep,
And give God thanks for our new day,
Mine to be still in, yours to use;
Give thanks that I, roused up from sleep,
Have leisure to lie still and pray
For my day's portion of good news.

One hour I keep at noon. The air
Pulses with noise. I pass before
Shop-windows where a lull comes least
Often. Behold! my shrine is there.
I enter in and shut the door
And turn in heart towards the East.

After the dusk I keep one hour.
Windows are lighted, home-blinds drop
For most men over work. But hark,
How Fleet Street starts to build a Tower
Of Babel near St Paul's! I stop
To give God thanks the shrine's so dark.

All hours are yours in verity.
My very dear, I'd never shrink
From thought of you if I had nerve
To pray thro' more than these poor three.
I cannot both be still and think:
"On active service." Thus I serve.

ON NIGHT-DUTY

Though I am the mistress of my dreams by daylight,
Night is still to master, with his lifted pen
Writing on the darkness,
Inky darkness :
“ Dream again and dream again of dying men.”

Now he lists you wounded by a Turkish bullet,
While dream-logic chills me with the sophistry :
“ Dying men want water,
Cold, cold water.
For your dead in Heaven there is no more sea.”

Now he lets you haunt me thro' the house. My kitchen
Once was haunted by you in a dream, most dear !
But I had this comfort,
(Dear, such comfort !),
I who go in fear of ghosts, I felt no fear.

ON A HOLY WAR

Wishful, I see four holy banners borne
 High to a last crusade:
My vision's of the sword to vengeance sworn.
 Your sight is of the spade—
Of the spade digging for the hordes of slain
 That war drives forth like swine
From the hot sty he calls a cholera train
 To perish on the line.

My vision—women painting on men's shields:
 "With this or on this, come."
You see them haul across the muddy fields
 What war has left of home.
In cart on cart there's salvage of a wreck
 As in coast-warehouse piled;
And there's a bullock with a weary neck,
 And there's a weary child.

ON HOLY WISDOM

The holy wisdom is chanted yet
In Saint Sophia, whose church it is.
Though crescent on dome and minaret
And marble down to the floor are his,
Though the Turk comes turbaned, feet not shod,
He comes to tarry the time of God.

To the chant of it they built St Giles';
And wise old preachers who lie in state
With rulers of kings beneath the aisles
Preach yet to their north and yours: "We wait
On the will of God." (It's "Wait," not "Work,"
Which rules that pasha of Time, the Turk.)

Oh! harder than work! But how St Paul's
(From cross on dome to the sailor's crypt
All mine, dear, mine!), how he calls and calls:
"Wait, wait! Wait, wait!" It is holy script
On which the boom of his bells is based:
"He that believeth shall not make haste."

TO A JOURNALIST

I wish I were a gray goose quill!
Tired out by wilder flights
Towards your north, I'd work you till
I had the scent of heather still
In what you write o' nights.

I wish I were a nib of steel!
I'd deal with foes for you
More quickly far than you would deal,
So quickly that they should not feel—
Until my dirk was through.

I wish you kept me in your hand,
A passive thing! For when
Our battleships of talk are manned,
I know that I should understand
If I were but your pen.

FORGIVEN

I know you love me. But,
After my anger's spent
In words, you are content
To see the door is shut
On drama, and I'm driven
Into your cell of silence; there I'm pent,
To be forgiven.

I know you love me. Yet
For lack of words which tell
I'm loved, loved, loved, the cell
Is cold to me; I fret
In these the prison-clothes
Of silence—robes of love become me well,
And words shape those.

I know you love me. Still,
Dare I, who rack you so
In anger's to-and-fro,
Be sure you always will?
Love's words are like a charm's.
Forgive with words, or, if you cannot, oh!
With both your arms.

COMING OF SORROW

The sunlight was shining
On gold birch leaves
When Sorrow came, signing
His band of thieves :
“ She is the prey
Of myself to-day.”

He clapt me in prison,
Forgot me there
Till hands that had risen
Hung down in prayer,
Tongue had no word,
Once a language-lord.

I had, prison-breaking,
Black stairs to climb.
O cramped feet, o’ertaking
The feet of Time,
Pain’s a small thing
When, outside, is spring!

But, gold on birch leaves,
The sun was still shining.

FITTING SHOES

I ask to go through just one year,
One in seven,
At ease in shoes of Joy. And dear
As any arching lane in Devon
Shall be the green length of that year.

But if the shoes I have had on
Till they're leaking
Must be my fittest wear anon,
I ask that none shall hear them creaking:
"She has the shoes of Sorrow on!"

PERFECTED

By this I know my love is perfect made.
I do not ask life's open for us both;
My love has cut away the undergrowth
Of self about his path. Last night I prayed
You would not grant his prayer if he, upstayed
In the white hands of Luck, should then be loth
To take the hand of Love, and, with it, oath
Of faithfulness to poverty. Delayed
For one long night this penitence of mine:
But now, love-humbled, on my knees I go
To climb the common stairway of Your shrine.
His prayer once granted, he is gone, to be
A freeman in ambition's livery.
Grant it, O Life, if he'll be happy so.

FOR SHE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS

“ You with your brooches and rings,
And hung with gems about!
Love gives his servant none of these things.”
“ He shall be served without.”

“ You of the delicate shoes
On plain earth never put!
Love bids his servant march in the dews ”—
“ But shall be served afoot.”

“ You that have ever a friend!
Alone, you'd lose your nerve.
On service of Love you must go, not send.”
“ It is myself shall serve.”

HOME AND A WOMAN

Only the Homeland is
Home to me,
But if it were not land of his,
No home 'twould be.

And if the wind should blow
South or north
Over the sands or fields or snow
Till he went forth,

Forth I should go, in heart
Blissful. Nay,
For him I'd take the harder part,
If he said: " Stay! "

A WARWICKSHIRE CAROL

The greenwood of Arden
Is silvered with rime,
And frost in our garden
Has bruised the thyme.

Our brown bees are humming
“The queen shall thrive
Now Mary is coming
Towards the hive.

“Sweet honey all golden
We’d give if we could,
And sweet herbs, withholden
From mead and wood.

“We can give Them cover
Against the storm:
Above Him, above Her,
The hive is warm.

“To-night They’re in Arden,
Whom Palestine saw,”
Bees hum in our garden
Beneath their straw.

CHARM FROM CASTILE

My feet have rocked a cradle,
Wearily rocked a cradle.
Tireless as children may they be,
Tired, may they rest as lengthily!

My hands have carried water,
Wearily carried water.
May they be fresh as vine-leaves are,
Gathered to cool the water-jar!

My eyes have ached with sunlight,
Wearily ached with sunlight.
May they be bright as though my face
Were set towards some holy place!

THE CHANGELING

Tired of sitting, tired of sitting
On your purple throne of heather,
I weary for the ingle,
Its girdle-cakes, its peat.
My mother's by the ingle.
If I might ask her whether
She'd put away her knitting,
And give me scones to eat!

Tired of dancing, tired of dancing
On your green grass-rings by moonlight,
I weary for the leaf-drifts
Along the glen to school.
I'd trudge along the leaf-drifts,
Still frosty in the moonlight,
Nor send one pebble glancing
Across the frozen pool.

Tired of running, tired of running
To the day-sleep of your people,
I weary for the darkness.
Oh, I would be so brave!
I'd walk home through the darkness
Below the kirk's tall steeple,
Straight home, not even shunning
The martyr's tall, white grave.

FOR NIGHT-FEARS

Someone's awake in the sleepy house.

The stairs are talking, and all the floors;
And the wainscot talks, where a thrifty mouse
Is nibbling his way towards our stores.
Much darker there than it is out here!
But he's not afraid of the dark, my dear.

Something's awake on the sleepy lawn,

Where poplars gossip of coming rain
And the wind that comes to the grass at dawn
With news from the hills grown light again.
More ghostly there than it is in here!
But they're not afraid of the dark, my dear.

Somewhere there's always a light about;

A watch-fire burns on the broken road;
On the river ships hang their lanterns out.
So long as the lucky "hairst-moon" glowed,
Who ever wanted a song for fear?
(But I am afraid of the dark, my dear!)

TO ANY BIRD

I do not offer thanks
Because you are the air
Made visible—the banks
Of cloud are not more fair
With feathery down on strong wings as they fly
Across the waking sky:

Nor yet because you are
The air made vocal—dawn
Hears you on windy scar
And all but windless lawn;
Dusk hears you with the last wind's voice; you croon
The tiny airs of noon.

I offer thanks because
You, facing daylight first,
Are taught to make no pause,
But sing at once: "The worst
Is over for all watchers. Night is past.
Light's on the wing at last."

DANGER

“ You never heard her bugles blow.
Why listen from your pillow? There’s
A blackbird whistling all the airs
Learnt for his love-hour weeks ago.”
“ I hear her footstep on the stairs.”

“ You never saw her sabres flash.
Why look towards your window? Stark
Against the blind, tall poplars mark
Time to the wind that beats the sash.”
“ I see her bright eyes in the dark.”

“ You never felt her horses charge
Over your body. Visionist!
The very curtains, thro’ this mist
You raise around yourself, loom large.”
“ I feel her fingers on my wrist.”

THE CONSCRIPT

At dusk he sought the river bank:
Where poplars stood in serried rank
He stealthily knelt down and drank.

(A ripple laughed: "Who drinks of me
Shall drink again in Normandy.")

He crossed himself on breast and brow
With saving water. Surely now
His hand would turn from gun to plough?

(A poplar soughed: "Who kneels by me
Shall pray again in Normandy.")

But in the Berber hinterland
He died of thirst, and only sand
Dripped harshly thro' his clenching hand.

(His lips were cracked, but smiling. He
Had gone in death to Normandy.)

THE SCAR

Child, I am proud of it—this line
War wrote and Honour stayed to sign
Across the cheek I still call “ mine.”

I must be, will be, proud of it,
And watch you hurt, and cry: “ Well hit ”
A sportsman’s mother. Hypocrite!

I watch you, but I only see,
From blemish of rough usage free,
The baby that you used to be.

Oh! mine you were, and mine you are,
And lightly though you wear a scar,
It is your mother’s face you mar.

THE FIRST SNOWFALL

(Albanian: "Beyaz Jandarma"—"The White
Gendarmerie.")

Silent battalions, marching, marching,
 Silently marching,
 Bid the falls
Check white foam where the bracken's arching
 In the wind at his bugle-calls.

"Foam and the bracken, fight no battles,
 No more battles!"
 The blown wind drones.
No more into the rock-pool rattles
 Loud artillery of the stones.

"No more battles!" the blown wind falters,
 Gasps and falters
 Breathlessly.
"None with the snowfall strives or palters,
 None with the white gendarmerie."

THE TOLEDO

Narrow was the swordsmith's lane
Where they wrought me;
But I thrilled with pride in Spain
As they caught me
By the lovely hilt and laid
This for burden on my blade:
" I serve a lady."
Swordsmiths from the river plain
Of Toledo,
Hear the chivalry of Spain
In Madrid or on the Main
Say its Credo:
" I serve, I serve, I serve a lady! "

Where the green cicala clashed
Blades together
In her orange-grove, I flashed
From the leather
He had carried on his thigh,
Flashed my glory to the sky:
" I serve a lady."

For his lady gripped me fast,
Gone her beauty.
“ Kill, good sword. My charm is past.”
So I killed her. To the last,
Doing duty,
I serve, I serve, I serve a lady.

L'INTELLECTUELLE

Holier women go, their hearts on fire,
Along a lighted path
That hath
No turning to the left or right. Desire
Burns them a road through brain's grey gloom
And lights them to the Groom.

But He has set my feet on darker ways,
And thrust into my hand
A brand
Burning me while it lights. In holy days
Did any find the Heav'n all sought,
My God, by taking thought?

Did any, eyes alight with thought, condemn
Blind faith in older time,
And climb
Mountains that faith would have removed for
them?
Or any, hands burnt, feet half-shod,
Come home at last, my God?

When all the best beloved are safely come,
And all the children who
Know You,
O Heart beyond my knowledge, will not some
Below Groom's love run fast and faster
To Him the brain calls Master?

THE TEMPLE

Who but yourself has built this temple up

Within your soul?

“ Trust me,” you stamp on friendly bread they break

And on the cup

They take

Whose faith in you and friendship makes them whole.

(O God, my faith has made them whole!)

“ Trust me.” Your faithful come and sit awhile

Beneath the dome,

And think aloud before the image’s

Slow, listening smile,

Which says:

“ Ears have they, but no tongue, these walls of Home.”

(O God, I’m worthy to be “ Home ”!)

For prayer your faithful do not come. They know

That you are but

A woman like themselves, though housed with leisure.

They come and go

At pleasure,

Nay, cry against you if the gates are shut.

(O God, my gates are never shut!)

Your faithful do not often give you thanks:
 Always they give
A higher gift than thanks or wordless love—
 High trust, which ranks
 Above
Love's bread and wine whereby the human live.
 (O God, I'm human. Let me live!)

O God, but I am human. It's too high,
 This gift, said she:
I will keep faith with others, but I must
 Have one whom I
 May trust—
One friend who will be glad to smile: "Trust me."
 (O you of little faith, trust Me!)

IN THE AIR

You tempted me, and I have built
A castle in the smoky air.
(Oh! but the smoke is often gilt
With brooding sunlight. Not a share
Makes rough the Lowland fields, atilt
Against a rainy sky, for crops
Of gold more sunny than shines there,
Where at the gate laburnum drops.)

Always the castle has one tree,
But whether this be London plane
Or poplar come from Lombardy
I have not wondered, and as vain
To wonder if the rootstock be
In our small garden or a neighbour's
Or 'neath a plot which only rain,
As servant of the public, labours.

The castle's more than poplar-high;
So, very safely, from its hill,
We'll number off the passers-by
Of none account, and look until

The looked-for one of them shall eye
 Its many stories and come climbing
Its many stairways, when she will
 Lock up her drawing and my rhyming.

(She will not help with building this;
 But shall I build without her now
After these years of kiss for kiss
 And hand in hand?—I had a vow
That what she might have done amiss
 I'd claim on Judgment Day, and kissed her
Nightly with keen foreknowledge how
 I'd ward off justice: "I'm her sister.")

It is my hope that women who
 Were girls when we were girls may think
Time never wasted on us two.
 They'll let their lifted bracelets clink
In wonder at the things we do
 With there a splotch and blotch of colour
And here a splash and dash of ink;
 They'll say their duteous lives are duller.

It is my hope that children may
 Think time not wholly wasted if
They grant our love a holiday
 And teach it, sedentary, stiff

For lack of playmates, how to play
Games of the country of the young,
Where rhyme is done in hieroglyph
And songs are danced, not idly sung.

It is my hope—our hope—to keep
Our finger-tips so squarely on
The pulse of life that ev'ry leap
Shall count as ten. And once we're gone
It shall be wondered that we sleep,
Who kept our minds awake, and never
Went openly with faces wan
Until they had turned wan for ever.

But chance-times (let's pretend!) you'll come,
And say: "It's quiet," and, content,
You'll sit here, with the far-off hum
Of London for admonishment
To leisured women. Humorsome
You'd think it (or be troubled by it),
If we should say: "You're an event,"
And not: "Oh! yes, the castle's quiet."

BY THE FIRELIGHT

Not by the wayside with a begging bowl
That asks an alms from Time shall you be found,
But sitting, dear, at the receipt of toll
Near a newsmart. Round after daily round
Shall buy your right to sound
Seas afar off with your pen's plummet
Which fathoms but your friend now; to patrol
The frontiers of Life, or climb her summit.

But oh! be sure that you will some day halt
At some poor inn and know that it is poor;
Dreams of the high adventure will not vault
Out of your saddle, crying: "Open, door
We have not stormed before!"
Youth will not always be your servant,
And when ambition will not rise to salt
The traveller's feast, you'll fare as friar observant.

Be sure that, some day, I shall dip my pen
Into my soul and find the ink run dry.
A woman, having wisdom, wrote that men
Say of us women, friendly: "Occupy

Until we come." But I
Shall rent for love from love that's wedded
Two rooms within the house of friendship when
Clear windows of my youth in years are leaded.

Nay, dear, you are a man with friends enough,
Or else I should not love you : but you go
Brave in ambition's cloth-of-gold, while buff
Is my accustomed wear, and I foreknow
That years which clothe you so,
Dull to me, will to you be duller ;
They'll split thick gold, fine silk, and from the stuff,
The very stuff of life, they'll wash all colour.

Then, weary of much journeying, you'll ask
Some halfway-house before the journey's end,
Where all the wine of travel that you flask
In books to-day you'll pour for any friend
Whom luck may choose to send ;
Where, in the sight of friends to grace you,
A pretty woman, or a pretty mask,
Shall by the fireside, at the table, face you.

O my soul's countryman, it goes for naught—
Our gift of tongues in common, and our gift
Of so consorting on the seas of thought
That I, far off in space, can set adrift
One common mind that swift

Flows back to me in fluent writing.
Ah! dearest! but I answer as I ought:
Your brain and not your heart I am delighting

When I am old, with my one talent wrapt
And buried in Time's napkin, you will tire
Of these frank letters I have grown too apt
To look for, and to long for, and desire.

But dreaming by the fire
My woman's dream of the one lover,
I shall be glad to muse: "A poet capped
My line of thought in days that are long over."

IN THE SUNLIGHT

Oh! never weigh them out. It were as wise
 Upon the scales of common-sense to weigh
Whether in a beloved face blue eyes
 Or brown were lovelier as to delay
 Your "Dear!" until I sway
 Scale of your love aloft with "Dearest!"
Coin love in words: believe love never tries
 Which on the counterslab of life ring clearest.

Do mine ring clearly? Love, I know they do.
 With words that heart beats out on heart the room
Throbs and still throbs, as if great bells leapt thro'
 Bob major change so joyous that its boom
 Throbbled in the belfry's gloom
 After the ringers were long rested,—
Though hark! I ring no change on "I love you,"
 And there's your best of joy-bell ringers bested.

And hark! I breathe no more than just your name.
 Love has his portrait limned in hues so rich
That it is worthy of the plainest frame.
 Love, who calls nothing common, robs a ditch
 Of just the wildflowers which

Folks drop before the walk is over ;
And he, who could pluck roses, would think shame
To lose the fragrance of a bit of clover.

You've a king's name, my lover. Yet you'd choose
One from the little language for the change
Kings make at crowning. Love and mothers use
The little language ; sweet it is and strange
That you and I, whose range
For words is earth-wide, are so bounded
To-day by love, we seek no distant views,
We sail no seas but seas before us sounded.

Ah ! dearest, things the least you love the best.
The little kingdoms of the earth, whose fate
Is to be wed by capture and possessed
By love imperial that, making great,
Makes him a happy state :
The little peoples, born to perish :
For such as these you put your lance in rest ;
These you are vowed to have and hold and cherish.

Dear, it's a little kingdom that you hold ;
The frontiers of it are not far apart,
Nor by a league of frontiersmen patrolled.
It has its secret seas,—and with a chart
To carry on your heart,
You shall but prove yourself a seaman :
It had its secret city till you strolled
Thro' close and yard to prove yourself a freeman.

Come in ; possess your kingdom. Nay, I come
Out of the city and across the fields.
White daisies hoist their flags of truce, white plum
And whiter cherry drop their rounded shields,
Because the city yields.
But look ! I wonder, dearest, whether
White spring's as brave as this adventuresome
Dust you once wore "for luck"? I love white
heather.

LIGHT AND SHADE

She looked into the quay pool, where
Tall ships were heaving side by side
With long heave of the lapping tide.
Windlass and cordage creaked. The air
Came heavy-laden to her lips,
Hinting at strange things on the ships.
She said: " If I might work out there! "

He looked into the alley, where
Tall houses in a sullen row
Were standing. At the doors, as though
They had all life to stand and stare,
Pale women stood, or, with their knitting,
On shadowed, grass-grown steps were sitting.
He said: " If I might work in there! "

ST BRELADE'S BAY

I dreamt that I, being dead, was found
Off St Brelade's at daybreak—drowned.

The green waves carried me to land
And stretched me on the wet, white sand.

The green waves lifted me by tens
To that grey church, the Fishermen's.

Above me, tumbled sand-hills woke
To glory as the morning broke.

Above the sands and crags and wreath
Of hanging brambles woke the heath.

And hanging where the brambles hung,
From heath to crag and sand you swung.

Across the sand-hills, hot and tumbled
And heavy to your feet, you stumbled.

"Here's love! Here's life for death!" said I,
You said: "Here's firm, wet sand for dry."
You came and looked and passed me by.

IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

No man had ever thought her fair
Or even called her so. Here lies
A piece of womanhood—blue eyes,
Pale cheeks, pale lips, and long, brown hair.

No dogs had ever thought her worth
Obeying. On the frightened hand
Whose touch they could not understand,
So did not love, lie gently, earth.

And let the weeds and grasses be
So gently stirred above her head
That men shall say, " She truly said :
' No bird has ever flown from me.' "

THE WIDOW

He loved his garden. While a bird
Chirped near the gravel walk,
They'd only share with any third
The pauses of their talk.

He loved his fire. And while a dog
Stretched feet towards the blaze,
They'd only want flame's monologue
To mark their passing days.

And so he came to sixty year,
A surly man and stout.
Ah! you were ill to live with, dear,—
And worse to live without.

DAUGHTERLY

I have walked softly with you all my days.

Go sleep before the fire, and daughterly
On footstool I will sit. When from the blaze
I screen one cheek against your high-flung knee,
Only the fire will see

One corner of my mouth a-dimple
With knowledge of the parting of our ways:
For your shrewd mouth in firelight grows boy-simple.

With knowledge ancient as our parting! Know

When you say "girl," I say "a woman-child"
And then "a woman." Centuries ago
(*You* reckon age by birthday-cheques, all filed—
"Receipts for love") I smiled

To find my young eyes could see clearly
Through some dark windows of your heart, although
For you all mine were frosted windows merely.

This knowledge and your love is all the gold

Put to my credit in the bank of life:
So with my bits of coin I buy what's sold
As joy to ev'ry woman not a wife:
For joy you are at strife,

But need not bargain with her salesman
As I must: coin of instinct which I hold
Is worn so smooth that care to use it fails men.

I must know you, for I am always yours.
But you are only mine when half of you
Is weary. Then I bait you with the lures
Of chair and firelight and, low-sung, a few
Old songs. (You think the new,
Tuned to no memories, are tuneless.)
What does it matter that a fire obscures
Light of the moon till all our nights are moonless?

What does the moonlight matter to a brain
Having no cell for beauty? What the sun,
Which finds you prisoner to your office-pane
Till all you set yourself to do is done?
As of all schemes not one
But is for my sake brought to being,
Does it still matter that I look in vain
For you to see fire-pictures I am seeing?

Dear eyes, it does! It does, O dear, shut eyes!
And half the scrutiny your papers claim
Would in my poor girl's wisdom make you wise.
This I have learnt: a mind to "play the game"
With women—and there's shame
To me, there's sorrow in the learning,
For this I feel: a market's pulse, and sighs
Of women-children put too soon to earning.

Some nights you ask the meaning of a look
Too grave, you think; and, answered, wonder why
And to what good I trouble. My soul's book
Used open at such moments with a shy
Trouble of leaves. Now lie,
Lie close, veined leaves he is not filing
In memory! Hopeful, the soul mistook.
How daughter-softly she must walk—but smiling!

ABOUT A BIRTHDAY

THE WATER-BABY

Oh! Mother! all in vain
Seas and wild April rain
Run as her blood together.
Is sea-blood hot to weather
Storms on some river-plain?

But Severn, brown and strong
And broad-mouthed, made a song:
“ A stranger-baby’s coming
To hear my loud waves drumming
As I march downalong.”

And Thames went by his line
Of bridges and made sign:
“ A stranger-child is dipping
Her brown curls to my shipping,
And is no child of mine.”

And Forth made link by link
Song-mail and sang: “ You think
Over the Auld Brig’s arching
A stranger shall come marching
Heartwards? Halt at my brink! ”

God says: "Halt patiently.
There's Heaven yet." But she:
 " What shall I do in Heaven?
 My heart will ache for Devon,
If there is no more sea."

NURSERY RHYMES

As you combed the curls
Before she went to bed,
“ Poems to read? ” you’d say,
Nor smile when they were read.
But oh! if you want to smile, you may,
Over the thought that your little girl’s
Is a laurelled head.

Rhymes about the sea
You always had to hear:
Raleigh, and Drake, and Devon
Whose sandstone rocks drop sheer
To waves that shall never wash thro’ Heaven—
These were the stuff of the rhymes which she
Made you, Mother dear.

Rhymes about slow death
Or swift she made, and cried
Over a dying child,
A bearded man, blue-eyed,
Drowned far from the sea where Home is isled.
These were the dead when she caught her breath:
Not a mother died.

Rhymes about the school
She made for love of those
Women who play the game
In life as in college-close:
“ At once for your friends, in friendship’s name,”
“ Not till you must, but then hard,” the rule
For your stroke with foes.

Of the rhymes she made
And read to you at night,
All were unworthy you,
But none unworthy light.
She prays that the eyes which shall read thro’
Poems unwritten shall know you prayed:
“ Keep her pages white.”

PRAISE OF WOMEN

She through her length of days
Loved greatly. O dearest
Of women dear to her love,
Your place she will never move,
That place—the nearest.

Here she gives Love His praise
For women—the others
Who make her, wedding their lives,
A daughter-in-love to wives
That are not mothers.

She has her cap to raise,
And proudly she raises
To women in cap and gown
Who in a college town
Teach learning's praises.

High price her body pays
For her higher schooling.
Oh! books are great, but above
The greatest of books is Love,—
An ancient ruling.

Yet through her length of days
A lover of letters,
(Though knowing the worth of them!)
She kisses the gown's black hem
Of these her betters.

PATIENT

“ Sitting like Patience on a monument,”
She, learned in strange letters, was not quick
To spell the simpler things, and could not pick
The seven, simple letters of “ Content ”
Straight from Life’s puzzle in her lap. How slow
She was, you know,
Oh! Mother dear, you know.

She learned at last to drop her “ Ichabod! ”—
“ Glory’s departed! ”—for “ Content! ” And Time
Wrote on the pillar she was put to climb:
“ This to the glory of the Most High God,
Possessing her in patience.” But how slow
Time was, you know,
Oh! Mother dear, you know.

“ This to God’s glory and in memory
Of Mother’s patience,” she would have Time write
On her life’s monument. You have to-night
Dealt with your April-daughter patiently
For more than twenty springtimes. And how slow
They were, you know,
Oh! Mother dear, you know.



GOD AND YOUNG APRIL

The holy winds blow April's door
Wide open; and as men pass by
The garden wall Doubt builds so high,
Their wise see lawns made smooth before
The blessed, blessed feet of Christ,
And see the building sparrows, priced
By God Who for them did not die.

God and young April walk the lawn
At daybreak. Though they did not stir
One daisy as you walked with her
Across the London park that dawn
Before her whitest Easter Day,
She touched Him when He crossed her way,
Nor thought Him but the gardener.

She touched Him. Mother! Afterwards
She only had your hand to grip;
The only cup which did not slip
From her white mouth was—not her Lord's.
And yet He is the Lord of pain.
Your hand in hers was—His: again
Toward pain's cup she nerved her lip.

TO MY MOTHER
AND SISTER
Your hand in hers! O weary Lent!
O blessed, blessed Easter Day
When, with a thousand prayers to pray,
Across a London park she went
Before the daisies were astir!
So from the later sepulchre
Love's hand shall roll the stone away.

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